

**MADISON COUNTY COMPENSATION BOARD**  
**May 29, 2008 MINUTES**

On Thursday, May 29, 2008, a meeting of the Madison County Compensation Board came to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Jury Room of the Madison County Courthouse in Virginia City, Montana.

Those people in attendance at the meeting were Marilyn Ross, Jim Hart, Peggy Kaatz, MaryAnn O'Malley, Ralph Hamler, Lisa Frye, Chris Christensen, Shelly Burke, David Schulz, Julie Ward, John Armstrong, Billie Ratcliffe, and Jill Steeley.

Commission Chair David Schulz opened the meeting, explained the Board make up, and stated that two taxpayer members newly appointed to the Board were Julie Ward from Sheridan and John Armstrong from Cardwell. Commissioner Schulz stated that a committee of county staff had investigated salaries in other Counties and the private sector and asked that Ralph Hamler, Sanitarian, report on the findings of the committee.

Ralph stated that the committee tried to compare Madison County to other growth counties with similar tax bases and population, etc. He said they also got comparisons for salaries of school clerks, title companies, construction companies, and other private sector employers. Ralph stated that the Committee also got longevity schedules from other counties. He stated that Madison County is not in skew with other counties and that he feels employees, elected officials, and Commissioners deserve raises. He stated that the committee is recommending a seven percent increase with longevity of one percent per year beginning after five years of service and capping at a maximum of fifteen years.

Julie Ward asked about non-salary benefits that County employees receive including retirement, insurance benefits, sick and vacation leave. She stated that employer costs and overall costs to the County would need to be considered. David Schulz explained the County is currently looking at insurance bids; that we are currently self-insured with an administrator that handles the claims but are looking at all options.

Jill Steeley, Public Health Administrator, stated that employees staying in one position shows loyalty and that it costs the County a substantial amount to retrain and hire new help. MaryAnn O'Malley, Justice of the Peace, stated that because of the growth in the County, there is increased responsibility that goes with it and that one department being busy causes a trickle down effect for all departments. Peggy Kaatz, Clerk and Recorder, stated that Madison County is ranked number ten in the state for taxable value but is twenty-one in pay scale, and that eleven other counties are higher paid but have a lower taxable value. Ralph Hamler stated that in other counties there are three to four people doing the job that he does.

Shelly Burke, Treasurer, listed the salary increases that have been given in the past seven years, stating that the increase in 2001 was 8.8%, 2002 was 2.8%, 2003 was 4%, 2004 was 4%, 2005 was 3.1%, 2006 was 4.7%, and 2007 was 4.4%. Billie Ratcliffe stated that insurance increases were a factor on years that salary increases were fairly low. Julie Ward stated that she has no qualms that increases are justifiable, we just need to look at where they're coming from. Peggy Kaatz stated that they are not looking at increasing mills to pay salaries.

Much discussion ensued regarding longevity. David Schulz stated that the committee proposed an increase of seven percent a year for the next two years and asked if seven percent this year would be acceptable, if it were revisited next year. Chris Christensen, County Attorney, stated that it is mandatory that the Compensation Board meet every year. Ralph Hamler stated seven percent would be acceptable to him if the longevity is accepted. Shelly Burke stated that the reason the proposal was presented for a two year period is because it would take a fourteen percent increase to bring Madison County up to the average of comparable counties and the committee felt that it would be easier to take if the increase were spread out over two years.

Julie Ward asked if the Finance Department could prepare a spreadsheet showing what the longevity increases would be over the next five years if this proposal were accepted.

The next meeting was set for 4:00 p.m. on June, 9, 2008.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Compensation Board Meeting, May 29, 2008

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David Schulz, Chairman  
Board of Madison County Commissioners

Date Approved: June 9, 2008

Minutes prepared by:

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Laurie Buyan, Administrative Assistant

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Peggy Kaatz, Clerk and Recorder, Madison County